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Insight and Outlook . . . By Joseph Kraft

Rusk Carries On

LIKE Abbe Sleyes in the French Revolution, Dean Rusk, as he completes his fifth year as Secretary of State, can count it a major achievement that he survived. But how?

Certainly not by grabbing power and holding on for dear life. Rusk has allowed European affairs to fall into the hands of Under Secretary George Ball. He has palmed Vietnam off on Defense Secretary Robert McNamara.

Latin America, once the bief of former Assistant Secretary Thomas Mann, will be no less the preserve of the new Assistant Secretary, Lincoln Gordon. Arthur Goldberg runs the American show at the United Nations as no American Ambassador there before him.

African and Middle Eastern policy has been fashioned chiefly by Robert Komer of McGeorge Bundy's staff in the White House. Bundy and Ambassadors Averell Harriman and Llewellyn Thompson, not to mention the President, have played the creative role in relations with Russia.

Rusk, in short, is far from



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being an empire-builder, jealous of his bureaucratic prerogatives. On the contrary, he has the reverse kind of character. Hard-working, articulate, a master of the negotiating craft and of sticking to his last, he is the beau ideal of what the State Department, in the fullness of its tedium, most admires—the old pro. His bureaucratic faculty is the faculty of plugging all the exits.

CONSIDER, for example, the Secretary's relations with Presidents Kennedy and Johnson. Both have complained of a lack of new ideas and flexibility at the State Department under Rusk. But even when he had deep reservations, the Secretary has never quarreled with policy lines dear to the White House—not on such matters as the cultivation of the neutralist countries under Mr. Kennedy, still less on the heavy-handed and largely unnecessary efforts made by President Johnson to justify what he did in the Dominican Republic.

Similarly with the Congress. Thanks in large measure to the Secretary, the usually troubled course of relations between Executive and Legislature has been transformed into a cool sequestered vale of life. It is a mark of the Secretary's

instinct for keeping Congressional fences mended that he was the man who originally came up with the idea of former Sen. Henry Cabot Lodge as Ambassador to Vietnam.

With equal care, the Secretary has picked his way among the bureaucratic minefields. He speaks of his relationship with the Department of Defense as a "partnership." He has not taken the opportunity provided by the current inept leadership at the Central Intelligence Agency to assert over the CIA a mastery almost everybody else thinks would be useful. As to the Department itself, Secretary Rusk has systematically cast his lot with the career diplomats who endure, even if they do not sparkle.

ONE OBVIOUS consequence of this kind of behavior is that nobody of any power wants very hard for very long to oust the Secretary; hence his survival. But the other side of the coin is resistance to change and innovation, an affinity for doing things, wherever possible, just as they were done before. Korea, which occurred when he was Assistant Secretary of State, if not Munich, which happened when he was a young teach-

er of international relations, seems to represent for Rusk the quintessence of experience in foreign affairs. Accordingly, he has been slow to see the change that has come over the Communist world since the Sino-Soviet split, and slower still to see the need for promoting a similar process of change in mainland China itself.

As the war in Vietnam has pushed the China question closer and closer to the surface of events, the Secretary has seemed more and more to dig in as a stone-waller for the old policy of the 1950s. And as inflexibility has bred public disparagement, he has even shown traces of qualities that seem to me far removed from his true nature—testiness and self-righteousness.

When American policies were sharply criticized by former government officials, Rusk never made reply on the merits. Instead he indulged himself in sour remarks about the propriety of using information gained through previous government service for the purpose of making money. Not long ago he called in, and taxed most severely, a correspondent of a foreign paper on the subject of some articles which the correspondent had not written and which, it turned out, the Secretary had never read.

Perhaps the new face of Dean Rusk is only a temporary thing. But to me anyhow, it raises anew the question of whether, after five years of grueling service, he has not outlived his usefulness as Secretary of State.

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